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URGENT NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY
GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 28 January 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a message addressed to you by the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin.

I should be grateful if you would distribute the present letter and its annex as a document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly under the items entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", "General and complete disarmament" and "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

ANNEX

Message dated 27 January 1992 from the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin, to the Secretary-General

Now that Russia has cast off the fetters of totalitarianism and is restored to freedom and democracy, the most important task facing it is the definition of its role in the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security. This includes its role viewed in the light of the special responsibility conferred on Russia by the status of permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, in a territory which is the ancestral native land of many peoples of several continents, Russia is called upon to perform at last its unique historical mission and to become a link joining East and West.

The performance of this key task presupposes two very important prerequisites: the creation of stability within the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the implementation of constructive cooperation with other States in the strengthening of international security.

Motivated by a recognition of this lofty responsibility towards the world, Russia and also Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have taken steps designed to ensure reliable joint control over nuclear weapons and non-proliferation of such weapons and we have acted to preserve a nucleus of unified armed forces with a joint command and to promote agreement between nationalities.

Together with other members of the international community, Russia is prepared to make its weighty contribution to the creation of a single global space of cooperation and security. We intend to be guided by precisely this long-term goal when we formulate and implement our policy with regard to arms limitation and reduction.

The swift march of freedom, which in the course of a few months toppled the remaining imperial structures, has with historical inevitability restored to Russians the true values shared by the rest of the civilized world - personal freedom, freedom of choice, initiative and entrepreneurship and the rule of law.

The "iron curtain", which was reinforced by the "beseiged fortress" doctrine imposed on the people and which separated us from the rest of the world, has finally collapsed.

The elimination of the artificial division of the world into two hostile camps is the great event of the end of the twentieth century. The world is again finding its unity on the solid basis of democratic values and human rights. Mankind is entering a new era.

In the existing conditions of qualitatively new political realities, the international community must radically reinvestigate the problems of ensuring international and national security.

As far as Russia is concerned, the concept of its nation-wide security will henceforth be based on principles of effective global and regional military and political stability.

The construction of a new world order based on general democratic values and norms of law requires all States to adopt radical measures to dismantle the superfluous military capabilities preserved through inertia and to reduce them to such levels that peoples will at last be liberated from fear of the possible destruction of human civilization itself.

As we advance towards a humane and demilitarized world order, we must not, of course, overlook the challenges to the international community and to stability and prosperity on the planet which may be created by the wishes of other irresponsible politicians. A united and indivisible world, which is advocated by Russia and by all the States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States, presupposes the existence of effective mechanisms of collective opposition to any act of aggression and international lawlessness. The structures of national armed forces must to a greater extent than is now the case be geared to the goals of ensuring collective security. Accordingly, Russia will do everything possible to promote the further strengthening of the role of the United Nations and its component institutions in the maintenance of peace. If necessary, this will include the provision of our armed forces, in accordance with constitutional procedures, to participate in appropriate international activities.

Russia declares that it is prepared to cooperate with all States and international organizations to this end. It reaffirms that it will not use armed force against any State or States in any circumstances whatsoever, except in response to aggression against Russia, its friends and allies, and will not be the first to use nuclear weapons.

A key element of our efforts to create a single global security space will be active participation and cooperation in the process of arms limitation and reduction.

Disarmament is a traditional priority of Russia. This goes back to the Hague conferences at the end of the last and beginning of the present century, of which Russia was the initiator. And today disarmament is seen by us as one of the most important instruments for ensuring national security and strengthening international peace and stability.

As the successor State to the former USSR, Russia reaffirms all its obligations under bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements in force and signed on the subject of arms limitation and disarmament and will strictly observe them.

As regards military-political and military-strategic questions, we shall steadfastly abide by the following long-term policies.

We shall organize the armed forces in such a manner that they cannot be used for purposes other than defence and peace-keeping activities in accordance with decisions of the international community.

On the road to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere, we shall strive to reduce nuclear forces to the minimum level which would guarantee that there will be no war. Incentives to making a first disabling strike must also be eliminated.

We are no longer adversaries of the United States and the other NATO countries and we consider as obsolete a situation in which we aim our nuclear sights at each other. We must by joint efforts decisively deliver ourselves from this legacy of the period of confrontation and "cold war".

The processes of nuclear disarmament, which the interests of the peoples of the world so insistently require us to implement, will be incomplete and inadequate if they are conducted solely within the framework of relations between Russia and the United Nations. The other nuclear Powers - China, the United Kingdom and France - must not remain on the sidelines and continue the uncontrolled build-up of their offensive nuclear arsenals. This could already in the next few years destabilize the international situation. They must also participate in the processes of genuine nuclear disarmament.

In addition to the elimination of nuclear weapons, we support the complete elimination of all other types of weapons of mass destruction under effective control.

We favour the adoption of effective measures to strengthen the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction and also of the means of their delivery.

We advocate the maximum mutual openness and predictability, as well as measures of trust in the military sphere, including military doctrines, defence budgets, plans for the organization and activities of armed forces and the international arms trade.

We are open to cooperation in the elaboration of additional measures designed to avert the outbreak of war through accident, miscalculation or terrorism and to prevent military incidents.

We shall cooperate and participate in the creation of collective security structures on the basis of the United Nations Charter.

The pursuit of these long-term disarmament policies requires the very rapid adoption of a series of effective measures - both in cooperation with our partners and unilaterally - in all the key directions of the process of arms limitation and reduction.

Strategic offensive arms

The Treaty on strategic offensive arms has been submitted for ratification to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. The process of ratification of the Treaty has also begun in the United States.

Russia wishes not to rest on its laurels but, together with the United States, to move forward ever faster along the road to the curtailment of superfluous military structures, particularly nuclear structures. Further to the Treaty on strategic offensive arms, we have already taken a whole series of major unilateral measures. About 600 strategic ballistic missiles have been removed from combat duty, a whole series of military programmes for the creation of new types of strategic offensive arms has been curtailed, and measures have been taken to increase strategic stability and predictability.

As you see, the policy of good example in relations between Russia and the United States in the matter of the reduction of nuclear arsenals is already bearing real fruit and it must be developed by every possible means.

With this aim, we have decided on new initiatives designed to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament.

In addition, I have sent President George Bush the proposals of Russia for new, far-reaching reductions in strategic offensive arms.

Following the reductions which we have proposed on each side, there would remain a total of 2,000 to 2,500 strategic nuclear devices. In other words, the existing strategic arsenals of Russia and the United States would be radically reduced.

I intend at the forthcoming meeting with President George Bush at Camp David to discuss in detail and in a constructive spirit questions relating to further major reductions in strategic offensive arms.

Tactical nuclear weapons

We have also already undertaken, in parallel with the United States of America, major measures to cut tactical nuclear weapons. Currently, such weapons of the former USSR are located in the territory of three States - Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Pursuant to the agreement reached between the States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States, all tactical nuclear munitions will be relocated to Russia by 1 July 1992.

Production of nuclear warheads for ground-launched tactical nuclear missiles, nuclear artillery shells and nuclear mines has been halted. Stocks of such tactical nuclear munitions will be eliminated.

I say also that Russia will eliminate one third of the sea-launched tactical nuclear weapons and half of the nuclear warheads for ground-to-air missiles. We have already taken steps towards this end.

With a view to the total elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future, Russia will, in addition to these steps that are already being taken, cut by half its stocks of air-launched tactical nuclear munitions.

Anti-ballistic missiles and space

Russia confirms its adherence to the Treaty on anti-ballistic missiles, which is one of the effective means of limiting the strategic arms race and an important factor in the maintenance of strategic stability.

While maintaining this position of principle, we are prepared to continue open-minded discussion of the United States proposal on limited non-nuclear anti-ballistic missile systems. Our final attitude to this idea will be determined by the extent to which it meets the objective of strengthening strategic stability against a background of sharp cuts in strategic offensive arms.

I declare Russia's readiness, on a basis of mutuality with the United States of America, to eliminate existing anti-satellite systems and to work out an agreement for a total ban on weapons specially designed to attack satellites.

Prohibition of nuclear weapons tests and of the production of fissile materials for use in armaments

Russia is resolutely in favour of all nuclear weapons tests being prohibited. We are abiding by the one-year moratorium on nuclear explosions proclaimed in October 1991, and we hope that the other nuclear Powers will also refrain from conducting nuclear tests. An atmosphere of mutual restraint would promote the reaching of agreement not to conduct such tests at all.

In the interests of finally resolving this problem, we propose to the United States of America the renewal of the phased bilateral talks on the further limitation of nuclear weapons tests.

Russia intends to continue implementing the programme for halting the production of weapons-grade plutonium. Industrial reactors for the production of weapons-grade plutonium will be shut down by the year 2000, and some of them, under an accelerated timetable, as early as 1993. We confirm our proposal to the United States of America to reach agreement on a monitored cessation of the production of fissile materials for weapons.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery

As the successor State to the USSR, Russia naturally reaffirms its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including those devolving on it as a depositary. We are counting on the early accession to the Treaty, as non-nuclear States, of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and also of the other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Russia declares its full support for the activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and advocates a strengthening of the effectiveness of its safeguards.

We are pleased that an understanding has been reached on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean Peninsula.

We intend to take further steps to ensure that export from Russia should not lead to the proliferation of means of mass destruction. From the specific standpoint, we are as of now working on the issues involved in arriving at the principle of "comprehensive IAEA guarantees" as a condition of our peaceful nuclear exports and in officially adhering, as an equal participant, to the international regime for the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technology. We support the efforts of the "Australian group" with respect to the monitoring of chemical exports.

It is our intention to adopt domestic legislation regulating the export from Russia of "dual-purpose" materials, equipment and technologies which could be used to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as military missiles. We are also establishing an effective system for the State monitoring of such exports. We shall institute the closest cooperation and coordination between all States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States on these issues.

Russia supports the guidelines approved at London in October 1991 by the major conventional weapons exporting countries on trade in armaments, and will abide by them.

Conventional weapons

The treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe has been submitted to the Russian Parliament for ratification. There is an understanding with the other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States to whose territory the applicability of the treaty extends that they will also ratify it.

Russia confirms its intention, jointly with the other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States, to reduce the armed forces of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by 700,000.

Russia attaches great importance both to the talks currently under way in Vienna on strength reductions and confidence-building measures and to the forthcoming new talks, after the "Helsinki-II" conference, on security and cooperation in Europe. These new talks could become a full-time Europe-wide forum for seeking approaches to the establishment of a collective Europe-wide security system.

Russia will seek to reach agreement in negotiations with China on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in the frontier region.

Another important contribution to the strengthening of stability will be made by our decision not to hold in 1992 major manoeuvres involving more than 13,000 troops, and this not only in the European, but also in the Asian, part of the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

We also hope that there is a possibility of signing in the very near future a treaty on an "open skies" regime.

Chemical weapons

We are in favour of the earliest possible conclusion - in 1992 - of a global convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons which, while effectively barring the possession of chemical weapons, would not impair the lawful economic interests of its parties.

Russia is abiding by the agreement signed with the United States in 1990 on the non-production and destruction of chemical weapons. However, the deadlines it specifies for the destruction of such weapons will require some adjustment.

All the chemical weapons of the former USSR are located in the territory of Russia, and it will take responsibility for destroying them. We are preparing a State programme for destroying such weapons, and are ready to cooperate in this matter with the United States of America and other interested countries.

Biological weapons

Russia is in favour of the strict implementation of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons and of the establishment on a multilateral basis of an appropriate monitoring mechanism and for the implementation of measures to build confidence and promote openness.

Russia, as a party to the 1972 Convention, repudiates those parts of the reservations made by the USSR to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of chemical and bacteriological methods which relate to the possibility of retaliatory use of biological weapons.

Defence budget

Russia will continue to make substantial cuts in its defence budget and to apply them to social issues.

In 1990-1991, defence expenditures in comparable prices were already reduced by 20 per cent, and within this figure expenditures on the purchase of armaments and technology were cut by 30 per cent.

In 1992, we intend to cut military expenditures by a further 10 per cent (in 1991 prices). The volume of arms production in the coming year will be approximately half that for last year.

Conversion of military production

Russia welcomes the international cooperation in the field of conversion of military production, and will for its part encourage it by establishing a "most favourable treatment regime" and instituting tax concessions for relevant joint projects. Conversion will be carried out at maximum advantage to the nation.

These are the main lines of Russia's policy in the field of arms reduction and disarmament. We are open to ideas and proposals from other States aimed at strengthening international peace and security. Through joint efforts, a stable world can and must be guaranteed.